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# Gator Times

THE NAVY'S "TOP GATOR"

USS NASSAU (LHA 4)



NASSAU'S  
ENGINEERS



# Gator Times

March 2008

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## FEATURES

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### GatorTimes

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3 Gozo, Malta Tour

4 COMREL in Malta

5 Engineering

7 Self Defense

8 Dirty Jobs

9 Ship Art

10 Pen Pals

2 Captain's Call

CMC Corner

11 Command Achievements



"Not everyone can be a Hull Maintenance Technician. It's not a pretty job and takes hard work and dedication to the Navy to do what we do." pg.8



On the Cover:

DCFR Jeffrey Wrenn stands as the #1 Hoseman during a main space fire drill onboard USS Nassau

Photo by MCSN Jonathan Pankau

Cover Photo Illustration by MC2(SW) Michael Cortez

Gator Times

April 2008

Page 2

# Captain's Call



Capt. James R. Boorujy  
Commanding Officer  
USS Nassau (LHA 4)

Nassau's Sailors and Marines can take great pride on everything they've accomplished since we left Norfolk two months ago. The ship is looking great and reflects the pride and professionalism of her crew.

The Nassau Family is a big part of that. Our success here depends greatly on your support at home.

Thank you!

## CMC Corner

CMDCM (AW/SW) Stan Kopiczak



Shipmates, Nassau Family and Friends,

It's hard to believe another month has gone by with our deployment. Since our last issue, we have visited Malta, Naples Italy, and Souda Bay, Crete.

Although we've visited three ports it hasn't been all play. While in Malta we hosted a reception onboard with the U.S. Ambassador to Malta, honoring a Maltese family who has donated hundreds of thousands of dollars to help the families of fallen U.S. Marines and Sailors.

In Souda Bay we trained with 13 nations during the first week of Exercise Phoenix Express 2008. It was a great experience for all involved.

In a few more weeks we'll be at the halfway point of our deployment. Although it's right around the corner, there's still a long road ahead. We must continue honing our skills in preparation for future certifications and

inspections we face on our trip home and after the post-deployment stand down.

I'd like to congratulate our Sailors of the Quarter - ABH1 Pryuer, IS2 Murman, and AT3 Hodge. Also our Blue Jackets of the Quarter - AN Johnson, ASAN Barrett, ABHAN Adams, ITSN Johnson, MMFN Brumit, SN Pope, ISSN Johnson, SN Feldman, AOAN Mendoza, and HN Thomas.

Congratulations also go to one of our Individual Augmentee Sailors, ET3 Johnson was selected as Bagram Air Base Chief Petty Officers' Association Sailor of the Quarter.

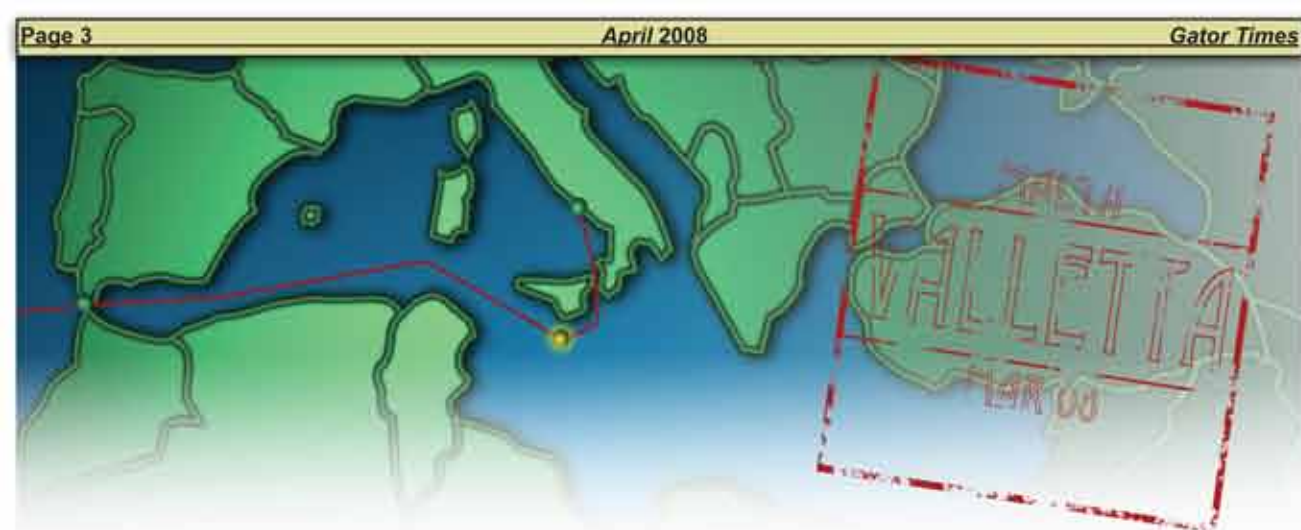
I ask all our Sailors to continue working on the personal and professional goals they set prior to deployment - I'm pleased with the progress I've seen so far. I would also like to thank you for all the effort put forth in ship's preservation and space beautification / "De-Nastification."

To our Families back home, I can't thank you enough for all the support to our Sailors, especially the families who volunteered for the Adopt-a-Sailor Program.

The Nassau Family Readiness Group will have its Children's Halfway Party May 4 and the Adult Halfway Party May 9. They meet weekly to work on the ship's lei and have completed 160 feet of it.

The families have been busy putting together "Theme Boxes" to send to the ship for a special auction that will help raise money for the Homecoming Party.





## Nassau Sailors and Marines tour the Maltese island of Gozo

Story and photos by MCSN Jonathan Pankau  
USS Nassau Public Affairs

USS Nassau (LHA 4) Sailors and Marines toured the Maltese island of Gozo during a port visit to Malta March 14-17.

Nassau's Morale Welfare and Recreation (MWR) Division set up the tour of Malta's northernmost island, where Sailors and Marines visited the Ggantija Temples, an authentic Gozitan meal overlooking Xlendi Bay, local markets, and the Blue Window in nearby Dwerja Bay.

The giant rock formations known as the Ggantija Temples, or "The Giant's Tower," are well-preserved prehistoric temples built by hand. Tourists can traverse through the remains of the temple.

Nassau's Sailors and Marines then visited one of the island's local restaurants, where they enjoyed local chicken or fish dishes, white wine and salads from a roof garden and a terrace overlooking the Xlendi Bay.

One Gozo's main exports is homemade wine, cheese and preserves that come out of the plentiful farms on the island. After touring the local markets and wineries, the next destination was the Blue Window, a natural rock formation, much like a bridge into the ocean. The rising and falling tides hollowed out center of the Blue Window over the ages to form a sort of window-shaped hole. The scenic location plays host to many commercials and movie scenes.

"The one thing I found very interesting about Gozo was when the tour guide talked about all of the desalination plants around the island and that with the rising price of oil, water will one day become more expensive than gasoline," said Aviation Electronics Technician 3rd class James Born. "It was an eye-opener for me because in the United States we take our water and water consumption for granted."



## USS Nassau Participates in Malta COMREL Projects

Story by MC1(SW/AW) Rustum F. Rivera  
Nassau Strike Group Public Affairs

Thirty-eight Sailors aboard the amphibious assault ship USS Nassau (LHA 4) participated in community relations projects while visiting the Mediterranean nation of Malta, March 14-17.

Sailors participated in four projects, to include the work at Holy Family Home for the Aged, the Residential Home for the Handicapped, the Little Sisters of the Poor Nursing Home, and the Missionaries of Charity.

Lt. Cmdr. Michael Gore, Nassau's command chaplain, coordinated the projects and explained the, "Maltese were pleased to see us, were very hospitable and the Sailors had a great time."

At the Missionaries of Charity project on March 17, Gore worked with Ana DeManuele who helps organize community relations projects in Malta whenever there is a visiting ship.

"This is the spirit of the Navy; one of the reasons why we are here. Nothing feels better in this world than helping somebody else," said Gore. "It brings a great deal of satisfaction. You are in the service anyway; the service of our country and the service of others."

One of the volunteers was Aviation Maintenance Administrationman 3rd Class Erica Ostrom. Ostrom explained these projects offer a great way to work with different people on the ship, and get to know new faces.

"Mostly, I'm helping others, and I had a good time doing it. Also, after learning that these women (nuns) are carrying on Mother Theresa's mission; it felt good to be able to help these women who are constantly helping others," added Ostrom.

Missionaries of Charity, or Missjonarji Tal - Karita in Maltese, is a religious order established in 1950 by Mother Theresa of Calcutta India.

Jason Davis, charge d'affaires, and Cmdr. Domenick Micillo, assistant naval attaché, visited the convent to thank the Sailors personally.

"We appreciate everybody's help. Thank you for spending your liberty time helping others; leaving the place better than the way you found it," said Micillo.



Nassau Sailors and Marines helped with various projects at all four locations. These included painting, organizing storage space, and gardening. Photos by MC2(SW) Michael Cortez  
USS Nassau Public Affairs



Jason Davis visits to thank the volunteers. Photos by MC1(SW/AW) Rustum F. Rivera  
Nassau Strike Group Public Affairs



# ENGINEERING



Photo by MC2 Amanda Clayton

Machinist's Mate 3rd Class Macillian Frederick monitors the control panel in the Aft Main Machinery Room



Photo by MC2 Amanda Clayton

Machinist's Mate 3rd Class (SW) Devin Matern and Machinist's Mate 3rd Class (SW) Samantha Palmer look over the Engineering Operational Sequencing System Manual in the Aft Main Machinery Room



Photo by MC2(SW) Michael Cortez

Machinist's Mate Fireman Justin Holliday puts a SSTG on the Governor in the Aft Main Machinery Room



Photo by MC2(SW) Michael Cortez

Machinist's Mate Fireman Apprentice Troy Scott starts the LPAC in the Fwd Main Machinery Room



Photo by MC2 Amanda Clayton

Machinist's Mate Fireman Cory Bennett starts the bilge stripping pump in the Fwd Main Machinery Room



Photo by MC2 Amanda Clayton

Machinist's Mate 3rd Class Troy Minter adjusts boiler water level using the feed water check valve in the Aft Main Machinery Room



Photo by MC2(SW) Michael Cortez

Fireman (SW) Lendon Poyser starts the 1A main feed pump in the Aft Main Machinery Room



Photo by MC2(SW) Michael Cortez

Machinist's Mate 3rd Class Cory Anderson paints the troft of an eyewash station in the Fwd Main Machinery Room





## SELF DEFENSE

Story and photo by MC2 Amanda Clayton  
USS Nassau Public Affairs

Data in the FBI report Crime in the United States, 2006 indicates that a forcible rape occurs in our country every 5.7 minutes. The same report indicates that an aggravated assault occurs every 36.6 seconds.

Women aboard USS Nassau (LHA 4) now have a way of learning how to avoid becoming one of those statistics.

Gunnery Sgt. Kenneth Roberts, who works in the Nassau's Combat Cargo Department, decided to start the ship's Women's Self Defense Class and teach women how to fight back when confronted by an attacker.

"I believe that someone who resorts to violence does not have control of his life, things around him, or maybe just the current situation and when words don't meet the resolution they want, they turn to violence to take control," Roberts said.

"I try to provide women with education on how to resolve the problem before it happens, and if need be, to use proper defensive force to take back control."

Roberts is qualified to instruct self defense methods and is a reliable source of knowledge.

"I train and certify Marines to be Marine Corps Martial Arts Instructors," he said. "I also teach the Marine Corps Martial Arts Tan Belt Course, eventually all the way to Black belt for those who stay with it."

"I take what I've learned and taught with Martial Arts and the Marine Corps Martial Arts Program and apply it to techniques on defending yourself through scenarios and practical application," he said.

The class offers techniques to counteract chokes, strikes and holds and what to do when unarmed against knives, pistols and blunt objects as well as basic movements, punches and strikes.

"I would recommend this class because it is informative, it teaches women what to do when put in unfamiliar situations," said Electrician's Mate Fireman Nicholi Peplinski, a student in the class.

Air Traffic Controller 3rd Class Erin Gitau, another student, said she couldn't agree more.

"I would recommend this class to women who may be single and living on their own, or who have been abused or may be involved in an abusive relationship. This class will give them a boost in confidence to stand up against their fears and make them more confident about themselves," she said.

"I thought that the techniques for defending yourself against the use of a knife or sharp objects were interesting," she said. "So many people these days carry knives

and other devices around in their pockets and it's nice to know some different ways that I can protect myself in case someone would decide to use it on me or anyone else."

The class is held every Tuesday and Thursday in the ship's well deck. If you are interested in learning more please contact Roberts at robertsk@lha4.navy.mil and set up an appointment for advice or counseling.



## 115 years

Chief Petty Officers aboard USS Nassau (LHA 4) marked Chief Petty Officer (CPO) Birthday April 1, celebrating 115 years of heritage and commitment to the Navy.

Nassau woke to a bugle calling Reveille, followed by Anchors Aweigh in the ship's announcing system and then heard a reading by Nassau 3M Assistant Senior Chief Damage Controlman (SW) John Billhimer.

Later in the day Nassau's Chiefs gathered on the ship's Foc'sle for their annual group photo, which is displayed throughout the year as a symbol of unity.

Nassau Expeditionary Strike Group Commodore Capt. Robert G. Lineberry Jr. and Chief Staff Officer Cmdr. Bradley T. Borden, and Nassau Commanding Officer Capt. James R. Boorujy and Executive Officer Cmdr. Neil A. Karnes then joined the Chiefs in Nassau's Chiefs' Mess for a celebratory supper.

Following the meal, the Chiefs then moved the celebration to the Hangar Bay and invited the crew to join them for an ice cream social.

"CPO Birthday celebrations in the past have been traditionally held in the Chiefs' Mess," said Nassau Command Master Chief CMDCM (AW/SW) Stan Kopiczak. "This year, we held our celebration in the Hangar Bay to let the crew know we appreciate the hard work they do on a daily basis. It is their hard work and dedication that makes the Chiefs' job a success."



## Dirty Jobs

Story and photos by MC1(SW) Charmin Covington  
USS Nassau Public Affairs

USS Nassau's (LHA 4) Hull Maintenance Technicians are some of the hardest working Sailors aboard the ship, but much of their best work goes unseen.

They're responsible for the ship's sewer system, hull structure and piping systems.

People seldom notice pipes that don't leak and toilets that always work properly. Nassau has 198 toilets on-board. Hull Maintenance Technicians take care of every one of them. They are the ones who keep the piping systems clear.

One of their biggest jobs is taking care of the collection holding and transfer tanks. This is where the ship's sewage is stored until it is processed and discharged to the sea.

Chief Hull Maintenance Technician (SW) Gary Nixon has been onboard a year and is impressed with his Sailors. His division also includes Damage Controlmen, responsible for Nassau's damage control and firefighting systems.

He said he sometimes asks the impossible from them and they still come through.

"My Sailors support the entire command, even when the command is unaware of their involvement," Nixon said.

Hull Maintenance Technician 2nd Class (SW/AW) Robert Wilcox, has been onboard the longest out of the nine Sailors in his shop. While underway, the shop has done major steam repairs in the forward and aft Engine rooms.

"The ship is steam driven and without it, the ship wouldn't move," Wilcox said. "Not everyone can be a Hull Maintenance Technician. It's not a pretty job and takes hard work and dedication to the Navy to do what we do."

A major part of the job is welding – Repair Division is responsible for nearly everything made of metal on the ship. Every piece of machinery has to be welded to the deck.

In recent months Nassau's Hull Maintenance Technicians installed four new self-serve clothes washing machines, three new steam presses in ship's laundry, and new candy machines on the ship's Mess Deck.

The workcenter has 200 trouble calls at any given time. They normally complete four to five of them a day. Like most Sailors, they stand watches in addition to working in

their technical field. Unlike most Sailors, they are all on the ship's fire party.

Nassau's Hull Maintenance Technicians perform a vital role in daily operations, toiling away in the bowels of the ship. When everything flushes and flows as designed, they've done their job.



"My Sailors support the entire command, even when the command is unaware of their involvement," said Chief Hull Maintenance Technician (SW) Gary Nixon.



"Not everyone can be a Hull Maintenance Technician. It's not a pretty job and takes hard work and dedication to the Navy to do what we do," Hull Maintenance Technician 2nd Class (SW/AW) Robert Wilcox said.





## Nassau Sailors Show a Unique Form of "Pride & Ownership"

Story and photos by MCSN Jonathan Pankau  
USS Nassau Public Affairs

Sailors onboard USS Nassau (LHA 4) are finding ways to express themselves and their divisions through art.

Paintings and airbrushed pictures are being designed and placed on doors and bulkheads around the ship by talented shipmates.

"We take pride in our spaces and are proud of its own unique look and feel," said Senior Chief Hospital Corpsman (SW/AW/FMF) Scott Radke, leading chief petty officer of the ship's medical department. "The artwork identifies us, our division and our specialties."

Radke created 10 pieces of art in Nassau's medical spaces. Radke plans to design and create unique drawings for each major medical space on the ship. He began creating artwork when he joined the Navy.

"I started in Desert Shield when I was bored and had nothing better to do. I started using various materials, such as scalpels, cardboard, or whatever I could find that was available," Radke said. "The reason I do it is to instill a sense of ownership of our ship to our Sailors."

Radke isn't the only Nassau Sailor involved in creating art on the ship. Aviation Boatswain's Mate Aircraft Handler Airman Emily Shaw, who works in the Air Department's V-3 Division, designed artwork for the division's office door and bulletin board. Her specialty is airbrushing, which she learned during her senior year of high school.

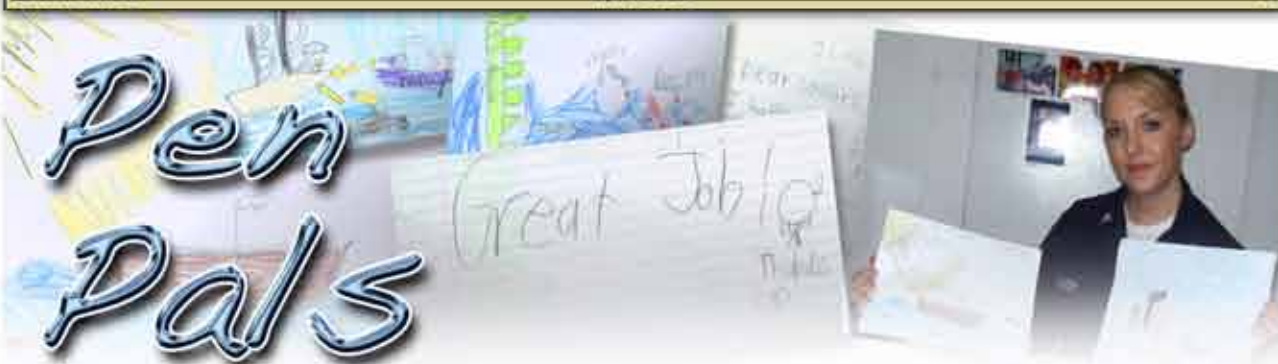
"My Chief was excited about it," Shaw said. "It gives our shops their own unique look and it's a great way to represent our division."

"Everybody has their own hobbies. It is an escape from the pressures of life," said Radke.

There are other paintings around the ship, such as the Damage Control Shop door and the Aviation Intermediate Maintenance Department Support Equipment door in the Hangar Bay. Inspiration can be found all over the ship and Nassau Sailors are showing that haze gray is not the only color of paint on the ship.



Above, the various art created by Nassau sailors.  
A) Memorial painting for Dewayne Williams by ABF2 Zavaliez  
B) Sept 11th tribute painting by AS2 Castello  
C) "I am a Firefighter" by DC3 Woodberry  
D) "AB Country" by ABHAN Emily Shaw  
E) "Freedom will Prevail" by SN Cedric Nole



## Nassau Sailors Participate in Pen Pal Program

Story and photos by MC1(SW/AW) Rustum F. Rivera  
Nassau Strike Group Public Affairs Office

As the Nassau Strike Group (NASSG) continues its deployment, Sailors aboard the amphibious assault ship USS Nassau (LHA 4) are actively engaging in a pen-pal program with 2nd grade students from the Cornerstone Christian Academy in Las Vegas.

Headed up by Cryptologic Technician (Collection) 2nd Class Rebecca Blumer, the project pairs Nassau Sailors with students of her mother, Angela Bergman, their teacher. The ship received its first package of letters and artworks from the students while the ship was in port Naval Station Rota, Spain on March 10. The letters were addressed to everybody onboard Nassau; some to Blumer, to the Captain, and to the Sailors themselves. The artworks contained drawings of dolphins, tulip flowers, Easter bunnies, cloverleaves, boats, a submarine and ships depicting victory and smooth sailing.

"The kids are very excited to do this," said Blumer. "My mom mentioned to her students about me being deployed for the first time aboard Nassau, and suggested that they should write and draw something for me and for the Sailors onboard."

It simply started as a letter and a Christmas card for Blumer, then the students became interested in her travels and the ship. And so that the children would better understand, Mrs. Bergman accessed the NASSG Navy NewsStand local site and printed a photo of USS Nassau for her students.

"I showed them the picture of the ship. The children hear about events on the news, but it has no relevance to them. I believe that by interacting with the Sailors; this makes these events more real for them," said Mrs. Bergman.

There are also greetings for a happy St. Patrick's Day and a happy Easter; but mostly, the letters are about their appreciation to the Sailors for serving their country, prayers for safe sailing, and some are wishes for a happy homecoming.

Cameron, one of the students, wrote, "Dear Soldiers, Thank you for fighting for our country, and helping all of our people. Great job! Thumbs up!"

Another student, Ryan, wrote, "Dear Sailors, Thank you for serving our country... It takes brave people to do what you do, and you are one of those people. You are brave, strong and a great person."

Blumer shared the package to the crew from Nassau's Aft Main Machinery Room (MMR) where Machinist's Mate 1st Class (SW/AW) Patrick Thompson, Aft MMR leading petty officer, was preparing to light off the boilers.

"We absolutely loved the pictures (artworks); they made us all smile. Everyone down here (MMR) that read them; adored them," said Thompson. "Being stuck in the main space, we don't always get moments like that to make us smile."

As an appreciation, Thompson had Blumer light off one of the boilers, and had her photograph taken to share with the students. "We will definitely send letters back, and one my crew also has a shirt that he wants to send to one of the students," he said.

From the Engineering Department, to the Aviation Ordnance Shop, on the Mess Decks and all the way up to the Commodore, Capt. Robert Lineberry, Blumer shared the letters and has encouraged all to participate and share their experiences with the children.

"The crew enjoyed reading the letters and looking at the pictures. Even the Commodore; he wants the artworks posted on the bulkheads around the ship. Everybody said that they will send something back to the students," said Blumer.

USS Nassau is Blumer's first ship, and according to her, "It's not that bad. Just getting used to 'ship life' has been challenging, and these letters and artworks made it a lot easier for me."





# COMMAND ACHIEVEMENTS

## USS Nassau's Sailors of the Quarter

Story by MCSN Jonathan Pankau  
USS Nassau Public Affairs

USS Nassau (LHA 4) Commanding Officer Capt. James R. Boorujy announced the ship's Sailors of the Quarter for the first quarter of 2008 March 29.

They are:

- Junior Sailor of the Quarter – Information Systems Technician 3rd Class (SW/AW) Ryan Hodge
  - Sailor of the Quarter – Intelligence Specialist 2nd Class (SW) Aubrey Murman
  - Senior Sailor of the Quarter – Aviation Boatswain's Mate Aircraft Handling 1st Class (AW/SW) Jerry Pryuer
- The Sailors were selected based on their professional accomplishments, excellence in collateral duties, and military bearing.

Murman said that taking the initiative goes a long way, but being respectful to your peers as well takes it one step further. One never knows when their help will be needed.

"Every Sailor has the chance to stand out," said Murman.

"It's all about hard work and being productive."

Hodge said that anyone who wants to be the Sailor of the quarter must have complete faith in their chain of command and realize that there is always a next level to anything you accomplish.

"Be patient. Your time will come as long as you work hard and perform above and beyond what is asked of you. Your chain of command will notice this," said Hodge.

Pryuer echoed the comments of the others and added that it's easy to do the wrong thing and think negatively but it's hard to be different and stay positive.

"The hard jobs that no one wants are the most rewarding. Don't be scared to challenge yourself," said Pryuer.

Their dedication and commitment has allowed them to stand out among their peers and helps set a standard for the rest of the command.

## Nassau Earns Second Consecutive "Green H" Award

By MC1(SW) Charmin Covington  
USS Nassau Public Affairs

USS Nassau (LHA 4) earned the annual Commander Naval Surface Force Green "H" Unit Wellness Award for the second consecutive year March 21.

The award recognizes excellence in command health promotion programs, which promote healthy lifestyles for the crew and to improve command readiness through education about preventative health care practices.

Hypertension awareness, anger and stress management, personal fitness assessments, and dental readiness are among the many programs the award recognizes.

"The whole point of the Green "H" is to prove the ship is preventing common medical mishaps," said Senior Chief Hospital Corpsman (SW/AW/FMF) Scott Radke, the leading chief petty officer in Nassau's medical department. "Our medical administrative officer, Lt.j.g. Patrick Chapman, lead the effort in compiling and sending out the package."

Nassau formed a board, headed by Executive Officer Neil A. Karnes, that reviewed every health promotion program on the ship, including those of other programs that coordinate with medical, such as the Command Religious Ministries Department and the command's Drug and Alcohol Program Advisor.

"The board sits down and asks 'What can we do to teach our Sailors personal health awareness.' They start by setting realistic goals for the ship to meet and come up with a plan of action to obtain those goals," Radke added.

He said Nassau's crew helped meet those goals by participating in the Health Risk Assessment program and a series of other projects to ensure the crew's health.

"It's good to know we're on such a healthy ship," said Nassau Deputy Disbursing Officer Personnel Specialist 2nd Class (SW/AW) Gariel Falu.

Nassau Senior Medical Officer Capt. Wade Wilde said the idea is to treat problems early, or even prevent them from developing, as opposed to maintenance.

"In this day of modern medicine, preventive health and wellness are becoming the most important things," Wilde said.

By promoting healthy lifestyle choices and offering education in dealing with the demands of life in today's Navy, Nassau is working toward improving the quality of life of everyone aboard the ship and enhancing the command's military readiness.

